

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

 Claims 1-13. (Withdrawn)

Claim 14. (Original) A method of joining a surface of a first ceramic component to a surface of a second ceramic component using a silver-based composition, the silver-based composition being a mixture of silver metal and a metal oxide, in which the metal in the metal oxide is a metal other than silver, the method comprising:

applying the silver-based composition to the surface of the first ceramic component;  
contacting the silver-based composition applied to the first ceramic component to the surface of the second ceramic component;

heating the surfaces of the first and second ceramic components to melt the applied silver-based composition; and

cooling the surfaces of the first and second ceramic components to form a bond between the first and second ceramic components.

Claim 15. (Original) The method of claim 14 in which the first ceramic component comprises a varistor.

Claim 16. (Original) The method of claim 15 in which the second ceramic component comprises a varistor.

Claim 17. (Original) The method of claim 14 in which the first ceramic component comprises a metal oxide varistor.

Claim 18. (Original) The method of claim 17 in which the second ceramic component comprises a metal oxide varistor.

Claim 19. (Original) The method of claim 14 in which applying the silver-based composition to the surface of the first ceramic component includes:

preparing a powder of the metal oxide;

mixing the prepared metal oxide powder to form a metal oxide paste;

applying a foil of silver metal to the surface of the first ceramic component; and spreading the metal oxide paste onto the applied silver foil to obtain the silver-based composition.

Claim 20. (Original) The method of claim 14 in which the silver-based composition melts at a temperature less than melting points of the first and second ceramic components.

Claim 21. (Original) The method of claim 20 in which the silver-based composition melts between around 900° Celsius and 1000° Celsius.

Claim 22. (Original) The method of claim 14 in which the silver-based composition is a mixture of silver metal and vanadium oxide.

Claim 23. (Original) The method of claim 22 in which the mixture comprises between approximately 0.1 to approximately 10% vanadium oxide by weight.

Claim 24. (Original) The method of claim 14 further comprising compressing the first and second ceramic components together before heating the surfaces of the ceramic components.

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Claim 25. (Original) The method of claim 14 in which applying the silver-based composition to the surface of the first ceramic component includes:

preparing the metal oxide and the silver metal;

mixing the prepared metal oxide and the prepared silver metal to form a silver-based composition paste; and

spreading the silver-based composition paste on the first ceramic component to obtain the silver-based composition.

Claim 26. (Original) The method of claim 14 in which heating the surfaces of the first and second ceramic components comprises heating while in an air atmosphere or in a near air atmosphere.

Claims 27-39. (Withdrawn)

Claim 40. (Original) A method of joining a first ceramic component to a second ceramic component using a silver-based composition, the silver-based composition being a mixture of silver metal and a metal oxide, in which the metal in the metal oxide is a metal other than silver, the method comprising:

placing the silver-based composition between the first ceramic component and the second ceramic component;

joining the first ceramic component to the second ceramic component;

heating the first and second ceramic components to melt the silver-based composition; and

cooling the first and second ceramic components to form a bond between the first and second ceramic components.

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Page : 6 of 10

Attorney's Docket No.: 08215-477001 / P05-026396

Claim 41. (Previously presented) The method of claim 14 in which contacting includes contacting the silver-based composition applied to the first ceramic component to a bare surface of the second component.

Claim 42. (Withdrawn)

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